

SMALL RANGE GRANTS USING WILDLIFE RESTORATION HUNTER EDUCATION FUNDS

2017 EDITION



Photo: USFWS-WSFR - Summit County Shooting Range

NSSF.ORG/RANGES



MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN

FIREARM SAFETY

Help promote the firearms industry's message

“Own It? Respect It. Secure It.”



Download the logo and
learn more at **NSSF.org/ORS**



HOW THE WILDLIFE RESTORATION PROGRAM CAME ABOUT

By 1869, vast herds of bison, pronghorn antelope, and other game species across the U.S. plains had vanished. Herds of as many as 100 million bison and 60 million antelope were reduced to a tiny fraction of their historic numbers, and many species were on the brink of annihilation. Thirty to 40 million passenger pigeons—so dense in numbers that reports said it took hours for the skies to clear during their migrations—had disappeared. Waterfowl populations plummeted. Species-rich swamps were drained and converted to corn, cotton and soybean fields and market hunting continued unabated.

Unfortunately, not much changed until the first part of the 20th century. Then, near total responsibility for natural resources fell directly to sportsmen and women, their State hunting and fishing license revenues providing the one stable funding source to protect, restore, and manage fish and wildlife resources. With the creation of State fish and game agencies in the early 20th century, fish and wildlife were given a legislative voice—and a bank account. But it was not enough. Underfunded, understaffed and prone to political interference, these fledgling wildlife agencies confronted frustration and failure.

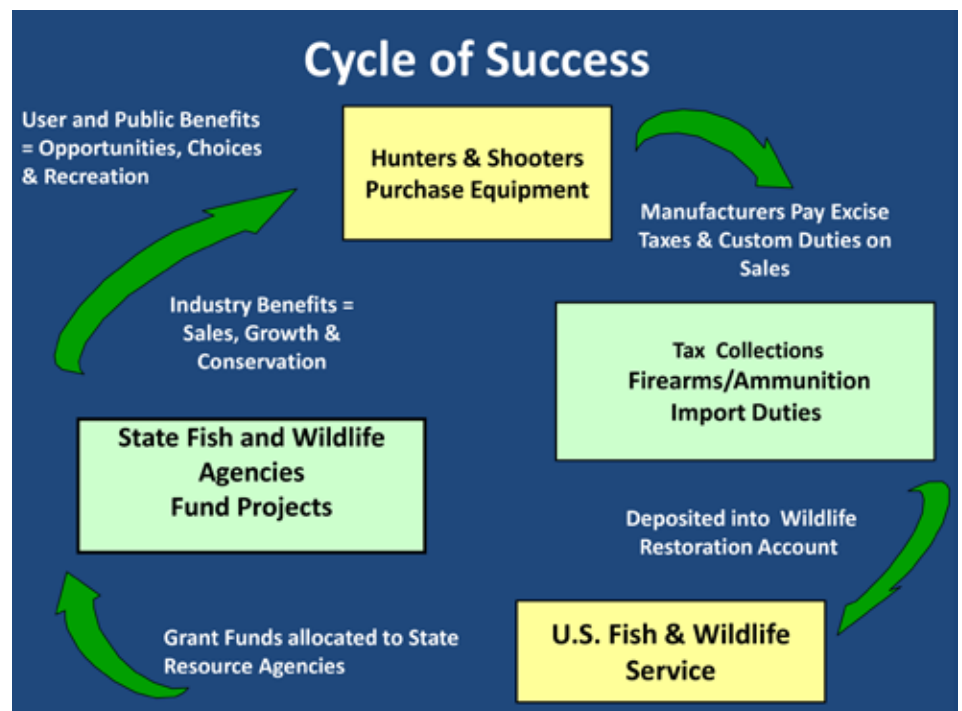
In 1936, a 10 percent Federal excise tax on sporting guns and ammunition already existed. Congress was in the process of abolishing such excise taxes, but industry manufacturers, sportsmen groups and other conservationists saw an opportunity, proposing to divert rather than repeal the tax. Proceeds from the tax would go to State fish and wildlife agencies

for projects to be matched on a 3:1 basis with State hunting license revenues. Firearm ammunition companies supported the proposal and legislation was drafted, becoming the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Passed through Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the bill into law on September 2, 1937. Today it is known as the Wildlife Restoration Program and it has proven its worth.

Excise tax dollars paid by industry manufacturers for products bought by sportsmen and women are deposited into the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund and the U.S. Treasury. The funds are transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) and apportioned to State fish and wildlife agencies based on a formula that includes land area and hunting

license sales. State fish and wildlife agencies use Wildlife Restoration funds for wildlife research and surveys, restoration of wildlife species, public access hunting programs, wildlife management area operations and habitat restoration. Through the hunter education subprogram, hunters are taught about safety, shooting ranges for firearms and archery are built, operated, and maintained and programs such as National Archery in the Schools and Scholastic Clay Target Program are funded to support the next generation of hunters and recreational shooters.

As of 2016, almost \$10 billion has been invested in the Wildlife Restoration Program. It is one of the most successful Federal-State-conservationist-sportsmen partnerships in history, and we should be proud of what we have accomplished together.



A RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

In 2011, a report entitled “Financial Returns to Industry from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program” was published by Andrew Loftus Consulting and Southwick & Associates. This report attempted to describe the return on investment to firearms, ammunition and archery manufacturers that pay the excise tax that funds the Wildlife Restoration Program. Some highlights from this report include:

- By law, excise tax dollars spent by State wildlife agencies must be matched by at least 25 percent of outside funds. In reality, this match is much greater because numerous other funding sources also contribute to wildlife restoration efforts. The impact of these funds is an inherent “return” to industry since many of these projects would not likely have been conducted without the core funding provided by excise taxes.
- Investment in conservation and access projects is long-term and builds off investments by previous generations. For example, land and water access purchased now will benefit hunters and industry for generations to come. Thus, some of the financial returns attributable to any given year may have been sown through investments made in preceding years or decades.
- Prior to passage of the Wildlife Restoration Act, State license fees paid by hunters were often diverted for purposes unrelated to hunting, such as supporting public schools. Now, prior to receiving any excise tax dollars, States must certify that their hunter license dollars are used only for administration of fish or wildlife programs, thus protecting those State license revenues for programs benefiting hunting and their supporting industries.
- Every year since 1938, the amount of hunter license dollars protected has exceeded the amount of excise taxes paid by manufacturers by as much as 1,000 percent, thus vastly increasing the purchasing power of the industry’s investment.
- With greater wildlife populations, the number of Americans hunting, i.e., the customer base for businesses paying the tax, increased nearly 2½ times between 1937 and 1982. Even though the number of hunters has recently declined, there were still more than twice as many hunters in 2010 as there were in 1937, based on State license sales.
- In constant dollars, the estimated return on investment to manufacturers that paid the excise tax (referred to as the “excise tax-related ROI”) ranged between a low of 823 percent in 1976 to a high of 1,588 percent in 1997.



ELIGIBILITY

Most State fish and wildlife agencies have established shooting range programs, and those States use their Wildlife Restoration funding to develop, operate and maintain shooting ranges on State-owned lands and/or in partnership with local governments and non-profit organizations. Additionally, some States have developed small grant programs to support work on privately operated ranges. (As of 2016, the following States offer small range grant programs: Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin.) For an updated list of states contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WFSR) Program and ask to speak with the Hunter Education Program Lead: (703) 358-2156

If you operate a non-profit, private range, and are located in a participating State, the information in this document can help you understand what is involved in the process and help you participate in one of these programs. (NOTE: Not all States have a third-party shooting range grant program. Check with your State fish and wildlife agency to see if this type of program is offered in your State.)

FAQS

What entities are eligible to apply? Only the State agency with statutory authority to manage wildlife resources is eligible to apply for Wildlife Restoration funds, though such an authorized State agency may choose to pass funds through to a third-party for shooting range grants including:

- Non-profit, membership-based shooting organizations having as their purpose the promotion of firearm and archery safe handling and proper care, and improving shooting technique and marksmanship (e.g., rod and gun clubs, fish and game associations, sportsmen's clubs and firearm and archery ranges).
- Units of State or local governments that own and manage shooting ranges.
- Other governmental agencies (e.g., Indian tribal governments) that own and manage shooting ranges.
- Non-profit youth organizations and educational institutions sponsoring opportunities for youth participation in the shooting sports.

Does your shooting range currently provide regularly scheduled hours of public access? If not, will your organization commit to providing regularly scheduled hours of public access if you receive grant funds?

- Yes—You may be eligible to apply.
- No—You are not eligible.

What is the definition of “public access?”

Grant recipients are required to provide public access during agreed upon times. The standard for public access to ranges is a reasonable number (somewhat correlated with grant investment) of regularly scheduled, continuing public shooting hours for simple recreational shooting or target practice. Public access does not have to be free, nor does it have to permit access to the entire facility or be limited to the facility portion benefited by the work accomplished under the grant. A member of the public should not have to be enrolled in a class, purchase a membership to a club, be a guest of a club member, participate in an organized competitive event or pay more than a modest fee to access the range facility. If a fee is charged, the fee must be modest, cannot be punitive towards public users and may only be used to offset or defray documented operating, maintenance and management costs of the facility. Any such fee schedule must be approved in writing and in advance by the State and by the respective regional WFSR Program staff.

Must my shooting range be non-commercial and for recreational use?

Yes. Facilities funded with Wildlife Restoration (Hunter Education) grant funds must be for non-commercial, recreational range use. Commercial use of the facilities may be permitted provided the commercial use does not interfere with public access during those specific times and events as agreed upon (e.g. associated parking facilities).

FAQS

What kinds of shooting range projects can be funded with Wildlife Restoration (Hunter Education) funds?

- Improve public recreational firearm and archery shooting opportunities by providing small grants to range-owning organizations for range enhancement.
- Accomplish improvements at existing firearm and archery range facilities.
- Develop new firearm and archery range facilities.
- Provide facilities accessible by persons with disabilities, where feasible.
- Integrate safety, accessibility and environmental best management practices into the physical facilities of ranges and the management of ranges.
- Support firearm and archery education to learn safe and responsible hunting and shooting practices.

What is the grant application process?

Please contact your State fish and wildlife agency for details on the grant application process. This information will normally include:

- Grant program objectives.
- Who may apply.
- Where grant funds can be used.

- Grant and match requirement.
- Grant amounts.
- The grant application, selection and selection criteria processes.
- The grant approval notification process.
- The grant management specifications.
- The grant recipient obligations (including useful life for a range, public access requirements, etc.)
- The contractual terms that will govern the relationship between the State and the grant recipient(s).

If I apply and receive an award, will I need to provide matching funds?

Yes. A minimum of 25 percent of the eligible and State-approved costs must be matched from non-Federal sources. This non-Federal match may include:

- Cash contributions (e.g. private funding or non-Federal, State or local funding) and/or
- In-kind contributions (e.g. the value of donated or discounted labor, materials, services, equipment or land).



Photos this page: Brenda VonRueden - WDNR

FAQS

Where does the funding come from?

Funding for the Shooting Range Small Grant Program is generated by Federal manufacturer excise taxes collected on the sales of firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. It is managed as a Federal grant program to the States under the Wildlife Restoration Program (Section 4 - Hunter Education and Section 10 – Enhanced Hunter Education) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a “User Pays – Public Benefits” program. Therefore, this grant program will involve local communities and/or organizations in a three-way partnership with a State and the USFWS’s WSFR Program.

What if the project earns program income or revenue?

Program income or revenue is understood to mean gross income earned by the non-Federal entity and which is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance. Applicants should be aware that any income or revenue generated from a Federal aid project must be returned to the project in the

form of funds available for the regular operations and maintenance of the project. If the actual project receiving funding from this grant program will generate revenue, then that income must be documented, reported annually and returned to the general operations and maintenance of the range facility only. Range fees must meet the definition of program income above to be counted as such. You must retain all documentation of income earned on WSFR-funded projects. More information about program income can be found in 2 CFR 200.

Are there any Federal Compliance Requirements?

Yes. A number of Federal requirements have to be addressed for all WSFR-funded projects. These compliance issues are addressed as part of the Federal grant application portion of the process, not during the initial application and panel review process. Depending on the complexity of the projects, substantial delays (nine months or more) may occur as a result of these requirements, although lengthy delays are the exception. The following table lists some compliance assurances that are typically required as part of the Federal review process:

POTENTIAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT	WHAT IT IS, WHO TAKES LEAD ON ADDRESSING
National Historic Preservation ACT (NHPA)	If the project may affect historic, cultural or tribal resources, consultation under NHPA with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) may be necessary for clearing your project. The State or USFWS normally takes the lead on this. If the project requires a Cultural Resource Survey (CRS), additional costs and time will be required. A CRS may be required any time soil is disturbed—building berms, digging foundations, building roads, etc.
Prime and Unique Farmland	If the project may affect sensitive farmland, you’ll need a written confirmation from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (previously SCS) clearing your project site from the unique or prime farmland restrictions. The State normally takes the lead on this.
Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 404 Permit	If the project may affect streams or wetlands, you’ll need a CWA permit or clearance from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The project sponsor normally takes the lead on this, if applicable, through contact with the local ACOE Office.
Endangered Species (ESA)	If projects may affect Federally listed species or critical habitat, consultation with USFWS’s Ecological Services may be necessary. The State normally takes the initial lead on assessing the presence of any ESA species or critical habitat. USFWS normally takes the lead if ESA consultation is necessary. If ESA issues arise, the project sponsor should work with the State to determine how to modify the project to avoid and mitigate any impacts.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	Projects that affect the human environment require NEPA documentation, which can require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). NEPA is a Federal responsibility, but the State normally takes the lead in document preparation. See NEPA section 102. (http://www.epw.senate.gov/nepa69.pdf)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Projects must be ADA compliant (though public entities may not necessarily need to make their existing facilities ADA accessible.) The State usually takes the lead for ensuring ADA requirements are met.

FAQS

What are the elements of a successful project?

- Start planning your project early and communicate with your State fish and wildlife agency often about your project goals.
- Before applying for a grant, spend some time discussing needs, goals and expectations of the grant program.
- Employ best management practices (BMPs). Planning and design of improvement projects should conform to generally accepted practices and the BMPs as described in several publications by governmental agencies and by recognized and respected national shooting sports organizations. A range management plan is an additional BMP consideration. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) BMPs for lead management at ranges should be followed as well.
- A project may only proceed after the State fish and wildlife agency agrees upon and awards the grant.
- Many but not all States administer this grant program as a reimbursement program. If your state is one of these, this means you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project before seeking reimbursement from the State. As costs are incurred, save all invoices, receipts and other proof of purchase and proofs of payment.
- Make sure to document volunteer hours worked as the value of these hours can be used as your local share (match). The State has volunteer time sheets available for your use, and these must include volunteer name, date, hours worked and, activity and be signed by both the volunteer and a State employee who can verify the hours. Taking these actions from the beginning of your project eliminates frantically searching for documents and trying to remember number of hours worked and who worked them at the last minute.

- Finish your grant project before your grant expiration date. If you need an extension to the date on your grant agreement, contact the State fish and wildlife agency well before the grant expiration date to request an extension. Costs incurred prior to the grant agreement start date or after the end date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Most importantly, ask questions if you don't know how to proceed or need clarification on topics such as eligible costs or grant administration procedures.

Are there any additional requirements?

A State may include additional requirements. Your State fish and wildlife agency will be the best source of information about requirements and the application process.



Photos this page: Nevada Department of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Find your state's Hunter Education Administrator contact here and find out if your state offers a small range grant program:
ihe-a-usa.com/instructors/directory-of-administrators

EXAMPLES OF SHOOTING RANGES THAT RECEIVED WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS

Oregon's Tioga Sports Park is a brand new shooting range complex that is currently under construction and is being developed in Coos County, Oregon, where firearms training facilities are currently unavailable for public use. The cost is in excess of \$1 million, but the range is benefitting from a partnership project utilizing funds from the Wildlife Restoration Program, NSSF, Oregon Hunters Association and the National Rifle Association (NRA). This facility will include:

- 600-yard and 100-yard ranges.
- A tactical range.
- Archery ranges.
- Plans to provide hunter education, firearms safety classes and youth programs for hunter safety.



Photo: Connie Martin - Board Member for Tioga Sports Park Association

Sometimes, shooting range grant projects solve complex problems. **The Douglas Ridge Rifle and Pistol Club** is located 20 miles from Portland, Oregon. With \$20,000 of Wildlife Restoration funding, Douglas Ridge was able to install an enormous shot curtain to contain shot from shotguns, allowing the facility to host shotgun shooting disciplines. This project protected wetlands on the property from being impacted by shotgun pellets, making the range environmentally safe and provided additional shooting opportunities. The total project cost was approximately \$500,000 and involved a 50-foot-high by 500-foot-long shot containment curtain. This unique project serves as an example of how shooting ranges can add shotgun disciplines while providing for high level of safety and environmental stewardship.

Wisconsin's Yellowstone Range received Wildlife Restoration funds, along with funds from the NRA and the Association of Wisconsin Firearms Owners Ranges Clubs and Educators, for improvements at the Lafayette County facility, which include:

- A new parking area for more than 30 vehicles, including ADA-compliant stalls, new ADA-compliant shooting platforms, side berms, backstops for the 100- and 50-yard ranges and a brand-new 25-foot range for handgun shooters.
- New shooting sheds with up to nine firing positions at each range, accompanied by a unique swivel seat design to accommodate both left- and right-handed shooters.



Photo: Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources



Photo: Keith Wanke - WI Department of Natural Resources

EXAMPLES OF SHOOTING RANGES THAT RECEIVED WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS

Maine's Big Pine Gun Club is a rural facility in Willimantic. Members and non-members travel more than an hour to get there. After receiving a Wildlife Restoration Program grant in 2013, the range has seen a major increase in non-member usage, due to increased shooter capacity. Improvements completed include:

- A new covered shooting area on a concrete pad and employing maximum use of natural light via clear panels in the roof, plus a storage shed for range supplies and maintenance tools.
- Four shooting stations and an ADA station, with ADA parking next to the concrete pad.
- The range covers 25-, 50- and 100-yard shooting opportunities.
- Additional side berm and erosion control work will be completed under a new grant.



Photo: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Nevada's Humboldt County Shooting Park project in Winnemucca is a true grassroots effort that brought many volunteers and donors together at the local level. The shooting range includes:

- Two 50-yard pistol ranges, 100-yard and 400-yard rifle ranges, and a parking area.
- The building is the first county building to be totally powered and heated by solar energy and provides recreational shooting opportunities and hunter education classes.



Photo: Nevada Department of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Colorado's Summit County Shooting Range, located outside of Frisco, received a \$100,000 Wildlife Restoration grant, along with other monies, to help with facility renovations and upgrades. Upgrades included new concrete pads on the pistol and rifle ranges, redesigned culverts for drainage in the mud season, a new restroom, two ADA-approved benches, an ADA-accessible ramp from the parking lot and a staircase at the main entrance. These upgrades make the shooting range more accessible to everyone, including recreational shooters with disabilities. The Summit Range Association worked closely with a local double amputee and sportsman who helped fine-tune the plans for the ADA benches. When paired with the ADA ramp, the 50-yard pistol range and 100-yard rifle range are now easily accessible by wheelchairs.



Colorado Photos: USFWS-WSFR

EXAMPLES OF SHOOTING RANGES THAT RECEIVED WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS

Thank you

We would like to thank the dedicated staff of the firearms and ammunition manufacturers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State fish and wildlife agencies and the sportsmen and women of America for their support of the Wildlife Restoration Program. This document would not have been possible without the efforts of Zach Snow, NSSF Manager, Shooting Promotions, and Christina Milloy, National Lead for the Wildlife Restoration Program and Hunter Education for USFWS-WSFR. Many others provided input and review of the document, including the USFWS-WSFR Regional Hunter Education Coordinators and many State fish and wildlife agency Hunter Education Administrators.

Barbara Behan (Region 1)

Dee Blanton (Region 5)

Justin Cutler (Region 8)

Kyle Daly (Region 3)

Otto Jose (Region 6)

Phil King (USFWS- National Conservation Training Center)

Doug McBride (Region 7)

Andrew Ortiz (Region 2)

Fabian Romero (Region 3)

Ruth Utzurrum (Region 1)

Wayne Waltz (Region 4)

Richard Zane (Region 5)





11 Mile Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470-2359
T: 203.426.1320
F: 203.426.1087
nssf.org

NSSF 12/16 ITEM#

PROMOTE

PROTECT

PRESERVE